

Foster Parents

Changing Lives One Child at a Time

April 2005



"Cherishing children is the mark of a civilized society."

– Joan Ganz Cooney

Join the foster parent list serve!

<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>

Check out the foster parent web site

www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents

For all our foster parents who cherish and work for children every day, we say thank you. To help you better take care of children, we are providing you with this updated information about activities and policies that affect what you do.

Annual Foster Parent and Caregivers Conference

The conference will be September 25th-27th at Ocean Shores! The theme is, "Together We Accomplish the Extraordinary: Honoring Those Who Care For and Support Our Children."

Creative programs and interactive/skill building workshops will be at the top of the agenda this year as foster parents and caregivers gather at the beach. One goal of the conference is to provide specific trainings and events that are relevant and applicable to the daily lives of those who take care of our children. The committee also wants to create a fun environment for the conference.

You do accomplish the extraordinary for children in our state. Please join us as we gather to honor you and those who help provide care for our children. If you have ideas about events for the conference and/or would like to be involved in the planning, please contact Diana Gray at 360-902-7871 or grdi300@dshs.wa.gov.

May is National Foster Care Month

Events will be held around the country and around the state to honor foster parents. Please watch the foster parent web site for more information. If you would like to participate or have ideas on how to honor foster parents, please call Bob Partlow, 360-902-806 (pbob300@dshs.wa.gov) or David de la Fuente, 360-902-7976 (dedr300@dshs.wa.gov). You can also contact this web site to learn what is being done nationally: www.fostercaremonth.org.

Kids Come First – II

The Kids Come First – II comprehensive improvement plan has led to several new policies that have been approved or are in development. Among them:

Timely Case Transfers

Currently, when a child is placed in out-of-home care, the CPS social worker assigned to the investigation carries the case and completes the required court work to establish a dependency. After dependency has been established, the case is then transferred to the Child Welfare Services (CWS) worker to begin working on reasonable efforts and permanency and concurrent planning. Often case transfers occur some months after the establishment of the dependency. This new policy will require that the case be transferred no later than the date that dependency is established. This means a CWS social worker will be involved with you sooner to work on a permanent plan for the child in your care.

New Foster Parent Training

All licensed caregivers (including private agency, Children's Administration and licensed relative homes) will be required to complete 36 hours of ongoing training during each three year licensing period. The mandatory training hours must be completed prior to the caregiver's license being renewed. If a current licensed caregiver is scheduled to be re-licensed in less than three years, the 36 hours of training has been pro-rated during the transition period, based on the remaining months of the current license. Please check the foster parent web site for more information.

More Frequent Contact With Social Workers

An interim policy is being developed to require visits every 30 days between social workers, children who are in out-of-home care and the parents of child in out of home care. This policy will be required for CA offices which in which caseloads are 18 cases or less. This means you may have a social worker come to your home more frequently to visit your child.

Dependency Guardianship

An interim dependency guardianship policy has been developed by Children's Administration to clarify the proposed roles and responsibilities for guardians when a dependency guardianship is established. Dependency guardianship is currently one of four legal permanency plans for children in the state's care. The interim dependency guardianship policy clarifies that the guardianship is expected to continue until the child is 18 years old with the intended outcome being long-term family commitment. It is not a step toward adoption, as it is unlikely that adoption support would be available to the child and family after guardianship has been established. Potential guardians may be foster parents or relatives with whom the child is residing. Reunification and adoption must first be ruled out as permanency option prior to establishing a dependency guardianship. Please check the foster parent web site for more information.

For further information on Kids Come First policies or activities, contact Sonja Heard (360-902-7957 heso300@dshs.wa.gov) or Frank O'Dell (360-902-7899 odfr300@dshs.wa.gov).

Once again, we sincerely thank you for all you do for children.